

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Committee on Government Reform
July 27, 2005

GSA has proposed to significantly expand the federally-owned property at 11000 Wilshire Boulevard so the FBI can modernize and consolidate its resources and operations.

The federal building sits between two of the busiest intersections – not just in Los Angeles , but in the nation -- Wilshire and Westwood Boulevards and Wilshire Boulevard and Veteran Avenue . The 405 Freeway, the second most congested freeway in the nation, has an on-ramp and an off-ramp within one block of the building. The largest VA medical center in the country (the 388-acre Greater Los Angeles Health Care System) is directly across the street from the federal building. UCLA is just over a mile away.

The Los Angeles Department of Transportation rates the level of service at the location as an F, the worst possible grade. There is bus, but no transit service, in this area. Traffic is terrible for many hours every day, including weekends, and peak hour traffic volumes are extreme. The infrastructure simply cannot support the plans GSA and the FBI have for the property.

I have asked GSA a number of times to provide me with specific alternative sites it is studying for this project. The most recent letter I received from the regional administrator in April 2005 indicated that GSA had received suggestions for about twenty-five sites from community members and the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation but was “not in a position to identify these 25 sites as serious potential alternatives.” He further indicated that the process was “still in a very early stage” and that GSA had not yet started evaluation of alternative sites.

Yesterday, my staff learned from the Washington GSA office that the draft EIS should be ready in October 2005, and it will include an analysis of alternative sites, if any such sites have been identified.

In addition to the severe infrastructure problems that expansion of the site would cause, there are serious security concerns. First, it is difficult to understand how the FBI could deploy in an emergency in the middle of this densely populated area with some of the worst gridlock in the nation.

I understand the FBI's need to better secure its facilities. The surrounding communities believe, however, that while the federal government will make an effort to harden a potential target against attack, there doesn't seem to be sufficient concern that the FBI's consolidated presence at this location would leave the residents more vulnerable to attack with an infrastructure further burdened as a result of the expansion.

The community is also worried that during a national emergency requiring the deployment of the FBI, its residents would not be able to reach the trauma center at UCLA or the VA medical facility to receive care.